

montana public health association



1118 Hobson • Butte, MT 59701

EXHIBIT 12
DATE 2/8/07
HB 406

February 7, 2007

The Honorable John Sinrud
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

RE: HB 406 – Community Health Center Support Act

Dear Chairman Sinrud and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:


The Montana Public Health Association strongly urges your support and passage of HB 406, the Community Health Center Support Act, sponsored by Representative Edith Clark. HB 406 will provide access to affordable, quality healthcare by setting up a competitive grant process for communities with limited or even no dental or medical care.

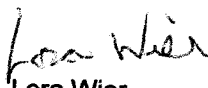
One of every five Montanans is uninsured and 54% of Montanans live in areas that have been designated as medically underserved. Accessing healthcare is also difficult for the 37% of Montanans that have incomes below the 200% of the federal poverty level. HB 406 will provide much needed primary and preventive care to uninsured and underinsured Montanans by supporting communities in the start-up of a "sliding scale" primary care clinic whereby the fee structure is based on a patient's ability to pay. Once the primary care clinic is operational, it is likely that federal funding will be granted enabling other communities to take advantage of state support provided in HB 406.

A strong public health system includes access to needed health services. HB 406 may, for the first time in many people's lives, provide a link to preventive health services thus a savings on expensive emergency room care.

The Montana Public Health Association (MPHA) is a diverse membership of individuals and organizations advocating for optimal public health best practice standards for all Montanans. MPHA facilitates educational and professional growth opportunities, networking and mentoring, and collaborative relationships for members and partners. MPHA joins with other organizations on specific issues to strengthen the voice of public health and advance legislation to support the people of Montana.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 406. The Montana Public Health Association looks forward to working with you on this and other important public health initiatives. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lora Wier, MPHA Past President, MPHA Advocacy Committee Chair, at (406) 466-2562 or health@3rivers.net, or visit the MPHA website at www.mtpha.com

Sincerely,

Terri Hocking
President


Lora Wier
Past President, Advocacy Committee Chair

CC: Representative Edith Clark